

Demand for stiffer penalties

By our own Reporter

A consultant ophthalmic surgeon called yesterday for severe penalties to be imposed on thieves who squinted ammonia into the eyes of their victims — a type of injury which, he said, was increasing

Mr A. G. Cross who was addressing a London symposium on the dangers to eyes at work, said that while attacks with concentrated sulphuric acid were regarded with loathing, such a reaction was not apparent in the case of ammonia attacks, though the damage to the eyes could be as serious.

Raiders who used ammonia did not receive noticeably severe sentences from the courts.

Serious damage

Mr Cross said serious damage might result if treatment for ammonia victims were delayed until the patient reached hospital. The affected eye had to be washed out with large quantities of a bland fluid such as tap water, or a saline or weak sodium bicarbonate lotion.

In an emergency, a patient could be pushed under a running water tap to wash the ammonia out of his eyes, or his head should be pushed into a bucket of water and he should blink continuously.